

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 199250 TOSEC 200328

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SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HEREWITH FULL TEXT NEW YORK TIMES EDITORIAL, AUGUST 11, 1976 HEADED "MINDLESS ARMS SALES".

2. THE EMERGENCE OF THE UNITED STATES AS THE CHIEF ARMS SUPPLIER TO THE THIRD WORLD, SELLING MORE WEAPONS ABROAD THAN ALL OTHER NATIONS COMBINED, HAS BEEN ATTRIBUTED PRIMARILY TO CONCERN OVER THE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS. BUT CRITICS ALSO HAVE PUZZLED OVER THE APPARENTLY MINDLESS CHARACTER OF THIS PROGRAM, WHICH HAS SEEN ARMS SALES JUMP FROM ABOUT \$1 BILLION IN 1970 TO MORE THAN \$10 BILLION IN EACH OF THE PAST THREE YEARS.

3. THAT MINDLESSNESS HAS NOW BEEN CONFIRMED BY A SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE STAFF STUDY OF IRAN'S PURCHASES, WHICH THE SHAH EVIDENTLY URGED SECRETARY KISSINGER LAST WEEK TO PERMIT HIM TO EXPAND FURTHER IN BARTER FOR OIL.

"U.S. ARMS SALES TO IRAN, TOTALLING \$10 BILLION SINCE 1972, HAVE BEEN OUT OF CONTROL," SENATOR HUMPHREY, CHAIR-

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PAGE 02 STATE 199250 TOSEC 200328

MAN OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE, HAS WARNED.

4. PRESIDENT NIXON, THE STUDY SHOWS, MADE THE INITIAL DECISION "TO LET IRAN BUY (VIRTUALLY) ANYTHING IT WANTED" IN CONVENTIONAL ARMS DURING AN OVERNIGHT STOPOVER IN TEHERAN IN MAY 1972 - ON HIS WAY HOME, IRONICALLY, FROM COMPLETING THE FIRST STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATIONS TREATY (SALT I) IN MOSCOW. THE SENATE STAFF FOUND NO EVIDENCE OF SIGNIGICANT ADMINISTRATION STUDY IN ADVANCE OF THE DECISION.

5. EIGHTEEN MONTHS LATER, THE DECISION'S IMPACT WAS TRANSFORMED BY A FOURFOLD INCREASE IN IRAN'S VAST OIL REVENUES - AND ITS ABILITY TO PAY FOR EXPENSIVE ADVANCED WEAPONS SYSTEMS. YET, AS IRAN'S MILITARY ORDERS SOARED, NEITHER THE NIXON NOR FORD ADMINISTRATIONS EVER RE-EVALUATED THAT SPUR-OF-THE MOMENT POLICY.

6. ARMS SALES TO IRAN STARTED THE PRACTICE OF PROVIDING THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES WITH ARMS SO NEW THAT THEY WERE STILL ENTERING THE AMERICAN FORCES WHEN SHIPMENTS ABROAD BEGAN - A FAR CRY FROM THE HAND-ME-DOWN ARMS TRADE OF THE PAST. IRAN, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS BOUGHT AND BEGUN TO RECEIVE 80 F-14 JET FIGHTERS, EQUIPPED WITH COMPUTER-GUIDED PHOENIX MISSILES, A WEAPONS SYSTEM SO COMPLICATED THAT IT HAS BEEN HANDLED WITH DIFFICULTY IN THE AMERICAN FORCES.

7. SAUDI ARABIA, WHICH HAS BOUGHT \$6 BILLION OF AMERICAN ARMS AND HAS RECENTLY BEEN OUTSTRIPPING IRAN IN ARMS PURCHASES, HAS OBTAINED FORD ADMINISTRATION APPROVAL TO BUY ASTONISHING NUMBERS OF SOPHISTICATED MISSILES. JORDAN EVIDENTLY IS TO GET A \$540 MILLION SAUDI-FINANCED AIR-DEFENSE SYSTEM.

8. A CASE UNDOUBTEDLY CAN BE MADE FOR SOME ARMS SALES TO ALL THESE COUNTRIES AND OTHERS. BUT THE AMOUNT AND SOPHISTICATION OF THE ARMS NOW BEING SOLD TO BOTH SIDES IN TWO MIDEAST ARMS RACES - THAT BETWEEN IRAN AND THE ARAB STATES BORDERING THE PERSIAN GULF AND THAT BETWEEN THE ARAB STATES AND ISRAEL - IS UNDOUBTEDLY EXCESSIVE.
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 199250 TOSEC 200328

ONE EFFECT IS TO CREATE A DEPENDENCY ON AMERICAN PERSONNEL AND SUPPORT, ESPECIALLY IN IRAN, WHICH MAY BRING ABOUT AN UNEXPECTED DEGREE OF LASTING AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT.

9. THE SENATE STUDY POINTS OUT THAT IRAN WILL BE DEPENDENT ON THOUSANDS OF AMERICANS ON THE GROUND FOR TEN YEARS OR MORE TO HANDLE PROCUREMENT, FINANCE, LOGISTICS, MAIN-

TENANCE AND TRAINING. IRAN WILL BE UNABLE TO GO TO WAR
"WITHOUT U.S. SUPPORT ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS."

10. THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL STAFF EVIDENTLY IS NOW

MAKING A BELATED STUDY OF AMERICAN POLICY IN THE PERSIAN
GULF, INCLUDING ARMS SALES POLICY. THE PRESENT POLICY
CLEARLY CREATES UNACCEPTABLE RISKS OF AMERICAN MILITARY
INVOLVEMENT THAT MAY, IF NOT QUICKLY CHECKED, BE BEYOND
THE CONTROL OF CONGRESS OR FUTURE ADMINISTRATIONS. END
TEXT. ROBINSON

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